

SOIL, GRASS AND CANCER—Health of Animals and Men Is Linked to the Mineral Balance of the Soil—André Voisin, Membre de l'Académie d'Agriculture de France; Chargé d'Enseignement à l'École Nationale Vétérinaire d'Alfort (Paris). Translated from the French by Catherine T. M. Herriot and Dr. Henry Kennedy, Secretary, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society Ltd. Philosophical Library Inc., 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y., 1959. 302 pages, \$15.00.

There is an old French saying that "we are what we eat." The author of this book, a member of the French Academy of Agriculture and the staff of the National Veterinary College in Paris, goes a step further. He believes that the control and prevention of cancer lies in a better understanding of human nutrition, especially as it pertains to mineral metabolism. However, most of his statements are speculative, and few data are provided clearly relating mineral deficiencies in the soil with spontaneous cancer in humans.

Nevertheless, since we do not know all the causes of cancer, and since there is perpetual exhortation to return to the grass roots, the author's reputation for producing the most highly productive methods of grassland management must be noted. Indeed, it was while working at his agricultural pursuits and watching his cows eat grass that "the scientific philosophy embodied in this work evolved."

He believes that the carcinogenic effects of tobacco can be reduced by a suitable diet. Indeed, he opines that the more rapid development of cancer among smokers today is due to alterations in our diet which has thus become less protective. "Exhortations to give up tobacco smoking are hardly likely to have any more effect than sermons on virtue, so the hopes of man must be placed on improving the protective characteristics of the diet." A simple step would be substituting whole wheat for white bread.

Correlations of geographic soil conditions and gastric cancer are recorded in some detail. By improving the soil, by adjusting the amount of estrogens fed to animals, the amount of insecticides sprayed on fruit and vegetables, and other allied steps he thinks progress will be made.

There is a foreword by Dr. Allan Fraser who expresses sympathy with Mr. Voisin's speculative views *because*, while the French colleague was watching over cows in France, he was watching over sheep in Scotland. Like a good Scotsman, this same foreworder terminates his piece with the sentence "I should be guilty of hypocrisy were I not to confess that I still find the hypothesis just a little too simple to be altogether true." This reviewer tends to concur.

L. H. GARLAND, M.B.

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HANDBOOK OF POISONING: DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT—Second Edition—Robert H. Dreisbach, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Pharmacology, Stanford University School of Medicine, Lange Medical Publications, Los Altos, 1959. 474 pages, \$3.50.

This new edition is changed so little from the first edition that the extra cost of making the few changes seems scarcely justified. However, a few valuable changes have increased the usefulness of this already useful handbook. First may be mentioned the summary of instructions for first aid measures to be telephoned by the physician, printed on the inside of the cover and the adjacent fly-leaf. Second, the darker type, with black-faced headings makes reading and finding desired information easier and thus facilitates managing emergency situations. Another noteworthy addition is the section on diagnosis and treatment of electrolyte imbalance, found so often with prolonged vomiting, diarrhea or water and food deprivation.

Since this work is an emergency handbook and not a textbook, it is questionable whether so much space should be given to chemical formulas and to pictures of the many types of resuscitation equipment. The physician is not in-

terested in the chemical structure of a toxic agent when confronted with a case of poisoning and he will not have an opportunity to select the most appropriate resuscitation apparatus. If justified at all in a book on poisoning, it would be better to include these in a classroom textbook or a more academic treatise.

This flexible-backed, pocket size book of six sections, 37 chapters and 467 pages is organized in an unusual way; the poisons are grouped largely according to use, as Pesticides, Industrial Hazards, Household Chemicals, Medicinal Chemicals and Plant and Animal Hazards. The arrangement within each class seems to be based upon frequency or seriousness of poisoning, but this plan is not rigidly followed, and for this reason the sequence is somewhat haphazard. The first section includes excellent outlines of Emergency Management, Diagnosis, Supportive Management, Prevention and Physician's Legal and Medical Responsibility. Chapter 2 on Diagnosis and Evaluation of Poisoning is an outline based upon the classical method for examination of the patient: History, including occupational and other types of exposure; Symptom History, arranged according to physiological systems; Physical Examination and Laboratory Examination.

The author, a well trained pharmacologist, is obviously experienced in diagnosis and management of poisoning, and has been fortunate in having his academic office and laboratory adjacent to a teaching hospital. He is to be commended for preparing this practical handbook.

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MEDICAL MANAGEMENT OF THE MENOPAUSE (Modern Medical Monographs 17)—Minnie B. Goldberg, M.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of California School of Medicine; Consultant in Medicine and Endocrinology, Mount Zion Hospital; Attending Staff Physician in Endocrinology, Children's Hospital, San Francisco, Calif. Grune & Stratton, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y., 1959. 98 pages, \$4.50.

The major emphasis of this book, as the title implies, is on therapy. Although treatment includes reassurance, sedation and psychotherapy, gonadal steroidal substitution is required in approximately 50 per cent of women. Whether or not one believes in the liberal use of hormones in this situation the book contains a number of suggestions which most gynecologists would be reluctant to accept. Four such controversial statements are:

1. The author lists 38 symptoms as being menopausal in origin and therefore correctable by proper steroid therapy.
2. The use of "progestens" to achieve a "medical curetage" makes such agents useful in the management of the menopause.
3. The use of androgenic substances locally is beneficial at times and well worth a trial in patients with stress incontinence due to relaxation and atrophy of pelvic tissues.
4. The suggestion that parenteral estrogens be used to control menopausal symptoms in patients who are still menstruating.

This monogram is essentially a treatise representing the strong convictions of the author that steroid therapy is to the menopausal woman as insulin is to the diabetic. The stated purpose of the book is to aid "the young practitioner" who, because of conflicting teaching, may be bewildered by uncertainties in the diagnosis and management of the disturbances of the menopause. As such the reviewer suggests that one might modify the author's paraphrase of Lincoln's to better read "You may fool some of the young practitioners all of the time and all of the young practitioners some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the young practitioners all of the time."

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